

gen on the Wolfgangsee the principal hotel stayed open for an extra week to accommodate only us at half the on-season rates. At the castle of Hochosterwitz in Carinthia our national cachet carried us, in cotton and tweeds, past armored and doublet retainers into a noble wedding where we gaped and snapped photographs of the gently curdling cream of Austrian aristocracy in frayed cutaways, remodeled presentation dresses, and tarnished gold-trimmed hussars' tunics.

The Adaptable Hollanders

Through Germany, France, and Belgium it was the same. Not until we reached the Netherlands, whose people's friendliness even the authorities dared not impugn, did we come face to face with the hostility and stubborn incomprehension we had been warned against.

It took us unaware in the fitting room of a large Amsterdam department store. My wife, who had had to start looking for maternity clothes in Taormina and had had no success in finding attractive ones between there and Cologne, finally located a suit that she felt might, with one or two radical alterations, do for the voyage home. As she suggested these adjustments, looks of horrified incredulity appeared on the salesgirls' faces. The tailor, department head, and floor supervisor were summoned, appealed to, and appalled in hierarchic succession. Scandalized underlings crowded into the alcove behind us, fingered the tweed, and examined the stylish cut indignantly. This was one of the choice garments in the store's new winter collection. They had all coveted it. The assistant manager was called. The sense of outrage increased. It couldn't be done. They'd never heard of such a thing. Why did my wife want to wander about in her condition anyway? She would be much better off at home. It was as if she had whimsically suggested retouching a Rembrandt or Vermeer.

Finally there appeared the manager himself, a massive, calm-faced man in blue serge. The salesgirl, department head, and assistant manager explained in turn. The manager blanched, and then with great dignity turned to us. "You are Americans, are you not?" he asked gravely.

We admitted it, waiting for the long-expected denunciations. There was a pause. He looked significantly at his underlings and one by one the expressions of indignation faded.

He shrugged, bowed, kissed my wife's hand, congratulated me on the future addition to our family, and withdrew. The tailor stepped forward, brandishing his measuring tape; the minor dignitaries melted away. The incident was closed. Once again our nationality had worked decisively in our favor.

A few days later we boarded the ship for home. We knew that, once there, all of the evidence for foreign hostility would again be shoved at us. We would hear once more that a nation of our wealth and power must expect to remain envied and unloved; that our very kindnesses, like the favors of a wealthy relative, must inspire resentment; and that

our tourists who sweep over Europe each summer must add to the hatred by their crude curiosity and loud mouths. But somehow the closely reasoned arguments would never quite regain their old conviction.

We had been part of that supposedly loathsome tourist tide. We had swarmed over ruins, rushed irreverently through cathedrals and museums, snapped indiscriminate pictures, craned necks, stuck our noses often where they shouldn't have been stuck. But the fact that we were Americans still sparked interest and not sullenness. The signs we read along our way—the important ones in people's faces and behavior, not those scrawled on Paris alley walls, displayed at conference tables, or taken out of context from high-brow café conversations — read, "Come back! Americans, stay here!"

The Great Torso Murder, or, Let's Investigate Foundations

MARYA MANNES

"TAKE that damn thing off!" roared the Reactionary Painter Who Liked to Paint Beautiful Women.

"What thing?" asked the beautiful woman on the model stand.

"That thing underneath, around your middle. I want to paint a woman—not a sausage."

Being amiable as well as pretty, the woman disappeared and took it off and sat down again.

"That's better," said the painter. "Why do you wear it anyway?"

"A girdle?" she said. "Why, everybody does. It—well—it holds you in. Women without a girdle look sloppy."

"You don't," said the painter. "Well, I feel sloppy. With a girdle you feel—well—pulled together."

"Just as I said," the painter retorted. "Pulled together, all in one solid block of flesh, like a frankfurter. Don't you see what it does to you?"

A girdle, he said, was just another facet of conformity. A girdle molded

every woman into the shape considered right for 1954 or 1955 or 1968. A girdle restricted real freedom of movement. No woman could walk well when the center of motion was held in bond, however elastic. A girdle neutralized true femininity.

"Why do you think Marilyn Monroe's walk knocks them dead?" he asked.

"I suppose you mean because she doesn't wear one," said the woman. "Maybe—but it's vulgar."

"What's vulgar about being a woman?" roared the Reactionary Painter.

'That Damn Thing'

He had hit upon something: the fact that an enormous industry has been built up predicated largely on a sense of guilt about the body. He might not know that about \$220 million worth of girdles, corsets, and combinations were sold to American women in the year 1953; but this swollen statistic would confirm his



What shapes your thinking?

CERTAIN primitives bind their skulls with strips of hide so that their heads grow "on a bias." When these wrappings are removed, the first flow of blood is extremely painful.

In our society, many bind not their heads, but their minds, and as a result of this tourniquet on their imagination, their thinking is biased and their opinions hidebound. To remove the wrappings and permit a flow of new ideas is painful here too, and these narrow-minded clans are careful to avoid it.

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The **Reporter**

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conviction that it was one of the greatest triumphs of salesmanship over instinct ever achieved in the field of women's attire. The millions who wore girdles did so not because they wanted to wear them but because they thought they *ought* to wear them. Excluding all special cases, the majority of women (if they were honest) would confess it was a moment of great relief when they took them off. For no matter what the admen or the corset people or the fashion editors said, the compression—however slight and artful—of a vital area of the anatomy was neither natural nor desirable. It had become, through a masterful campaign of indoctrination, mandatory.

"That damn thing," growled the painter, brush in air, "is an intensely Puritan garment: a feminine hair shirt which you poor idiots wear to expiate the sin of being a woman!"

When the object of his attention murmured something about "grooming," he exploded again. "Look," he said, "D'you know what grooming has come to mean in this chlorophylled country of ours? It's the obliteration of the animal in us—the healthy animal at that. Look at all your smell-less, bumpless, lineless dummies! Where's your female essence gone to? What do you think makes these untidy, raging, Italian actresses so damned exciting?"

"I often wondered," she said.

"You wouldn't if you were a man," he muttered.

'A Noble Thing'

Being wise besides being amiable, the woman said nothing, and there was silence for a while as the painter studied worshipfully the manner in which her shoulder joined her neck.

"How long," he said finally, "have you worn one?"

"A girdle?" she said. "Oh, about ten years, I guess—since I was fifteen."

"Can you give me any good reason," said the painter, controlling himself with difficulty, "why a girl of fifteen needs a girdle? Were you fat?"

"Heavens, no!" she answered. "Thin as a rail. But everyone wore one. They made fun of you if you didn't. I remember girls whispering about a girl who didn't—'disgusting,' they called her."

The painter swore. "What about

now? You're not fat now. Why do you wear one?"

"I told you. It's neater. Your clothes fit better."

"You mean you can get into tight-er ones?"

SHE LAUGHED. "You can call it that if you want. You can't wear things like tailored suits without a girdle."

"In other words," he said, "you need a girdle to wear the kind of clothes men wear. But you don't really need one, say, for the kind of full skirt you've got on now—which I like very much."

"But you're a painter . . ."

"And am therefore eccentric and have no sense of fashion? My dear woman, for centuries the painters have worshiped and understood woman as she is. Do you think for a minute that Leonardo or Renoir or Manet would have painted a woman with a girdle on? Or Praxiteles sculptured one?"

"Maybe not," she said, "but look at all the portraits of women with pinched-in waists and stomachers and things like that. That's not natural."

"No. But it is an accentuation of the female form. It is not—as the girdle is—an attempt to neutralize an area extending from the ribs to the middle of the thigh." He stopped painting to address her directly. "A woman's torso," he said, "is a noble thing—a vessel, a temple. Of whatever shape, it should be revered as such—not apologized for."

"Charmingly said," she countered, "but how would you like to walk down a street where none of the women wore girdles? It's all very well to talk about the young and slender ones, but what about the fat and sloppy ones?"

"For one thing," said the painter, retreating a few steps and squinting (he was a Reactionary Painter), "they're fat and sloppy because they haven't been taught to eat right and walk right and enjoy their bodies. For another, they wouldn't look half as sloppy if they wore the right clothes, which would leave them free from the waist down. Instead they shoehorn themselves into skimpy little things because they think they look younger."

"It isn't their fault. They wear what they can buy."

"Aha!" he gloated. "Conspiracy again: the dress industry and the corset industry hand in hand, the one needing the other and damn well seeing that the woman needs both!"

"I still think," said the woman, "that the female with a bad figure looks better when it's what you call 'neutralized' than when it's left to itself."

"That's a matter of taste. But I can tell you, my love, that any old Portuguese fishwife swaying down the street in what Seventh Avenue would call a bad figure is a joy to look at simple because she uses what she has in the right way. Her body is free—it functions. Put her in a girdle and she'd be a trussed fowl. Any actress, any dancer, can tell you that. The body simply cannot express itself in a girdle."

The Shape of Freedom

She was about to intervene but the painter cut in again. "Another thing you don't seem to realize is that a girdle does not in any way *remove* fat—it just *moves* it—up or down or sideways. The volume remains the same, only it's more equalized. I return to the frankfurter."

"Another thing you don't seem to realize," said the woman, "is that women have to hold their stockings up."

The painter grinned. "My spies tell me that there are little gadgets designed for that particular purpose alone."

"You know too much," she said. "But all I can tell you is that after you wear a girdle for a while you get so used to it you don't notice it."

At this the painter laid down his brush and shook his head at her. "There you have it," he said gravely, "the perfect definition of a dictatorship. If you impose conformity long enough, the shape of freedom becomes so dim that it ceases to be desirable."

THE WOMAN, stretching and smiling, rose to her feet. "I'm getting awfully stiff," she said, "Can I rest awhile?" He nodded and she walked around the studio, stretching again as she walked. The painter looked after her and shook his head again.

"Beautiful," he sighed. "Just beautiful—without that damn thing on."

Westbrook Pegler and 'That Man in the White House'

ROBERT K. BINGHAM

THERE'S A TRACE of innocent masochism in all of us, and for about a year and a half now I've been jabbing myself with the syndicated columns of Westbrook Pegler. As soon as this roaring in my ears lets up a little, I'll tell you all about it.

It wasn't as bad as you might think. I was able to lighten my burden considerably by skipping over rapidly whatever was said about the various members of the Roosevelt family (Hyde Park branch), dead or alive. That lady to whom Pegler refers with his customary gallantry as "La Boca Grande" is still his favorite subject, although the familiar pearls of invective that he strings and restrings with loving care whenever the mood strikes him—say two or three times a week—are by now worn down to the paste.

I already knew what Pegler thought of Mrs. Roosevelt. What I wanted to study was the development of his opinions concerning Dwight D. Eisenhower. It occurred to me that Pegler might find himself at something of a loss under a Republican President. Whom would we all be going to hell in a handbasket because of now?

I MUST SAY that Pegler gave Mr. Eisenhower every sporting chance to make good. "I am going to start fresh and try being patient with President Eisenhower and kind to him," he wrote a week after the inauguration. Of course, he went on to say that the President "showed blank ignorance of one of the worst facts of life in our distorted republic today" by not recommending the repeal of the graduated income tax in his Inaugural Address. But all in all, Pegler's patience held up pretty well during the spring of 1953.

The appointment of Martin Durkin as Secretary of Labor produced no more than a routine salvo against labor racketeers. Mrs. Hobby didn't sit too well with Pegler either; he

felt that Southern Democrats who had voted Republican "ought to serve a period of probation, like freshmen on a campus, before they are allowed to put on our pin." But the President's first State of the Union Message was actually hailed as a "repudiation of Roosevelt, Truman, and as much of the New Deal as may be wiped out," even though, sad to relate, "The monstrosity called Social Security appears to be imbedded in Ike's program." To be sure, the President would still have to keep an eye on Tom Dewey and Clare Boothe Luce, but otherwise the future was as bright as it ever gets for Pegler. Reminiscing almost fondly about an interview with the General at SHAPE headquarters in Rocquencourt several months before he became an active candidate, Pegler hinted that "Ike's statement of his ideas regarding labor unions was very encouraging."

Creeping Disillusion

But by the middle of June Pegler was beginning to fidget a little over "the European type social-democracy which is taking shape under President Ike." It also dawned on him that Mr. Eisenhower, even as other Presidents, had relatives, and he let it be known that the President's brothers Milton and Arthur would bear watching. Just a few days after the election he had given the President-elect fair warning to "get on the ball right now and ride off any of his relatives who may be making honest dumb mistakes or yielding to the Rooseveltian instincts which made a racket of the Presidency," and he was far from pleased with the company that Arthur, in particular, had been keeping. (Later in the summer of 1953 when Arthur Eisenhower called Senator McCarthy "the most dangerous menace to America," McCarthy himself was magnanimous enough to remark, "I don't hold Ike responsible for what



his relatives say." But for Pegler, Arthur Eisenhower has continued to serve as a minor whipping boy.)

Other unsavory details of the President's past began to come out. In July Pegler recalled that "after all, he [Eisenhower] was just a lieutenant-colonel when Roosevelt plucked him from the file of lieutenant-colonels and started shoving him forward to the rank of five-star General." "Does anyone doubt," he demanded another day, "that Truman so highly approved Ike's revealed politics as to take him up the mountain, as Arthur Krock wrote in 1952, and promise him the rest, residue and remainder of our country after he should finish his ruinous works?"

Pegler even permitted himself to wonder why Mr. Eisenhower had not accepted the Democratic nomination, "for he certainly would have won on that ticket as handily as he won on the synthetic Republican ticket of Arthur Hays Sulzberger, Barney Baruch and other fifth column Democrats." Another of Mr. Eisenhower's fifth-column Democrats, I learned later, was Paul Hoffman, "the public spendthrift who squandered us enormously into debt

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